



The President's Daily Brief

December 30, 1975

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USSR-ANGOLA-CUBA

The Popular Movement may be using Soviet-made jet aircraft in a combat role. Because of the recent stalemate in the fighting, the introduction of modern combat aircraft could have a substantial impact on the course of the conflict.

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[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Since the Soviet airlift to Angola began on October 29, there have been [REDACTED] persistent rumors that Moscow had delivered jet fighters to the Popular Movement.

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[REDACTED]

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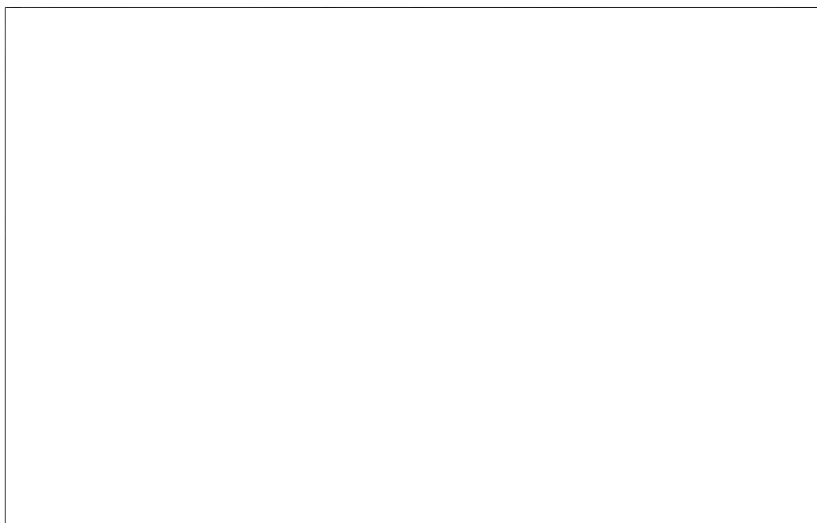
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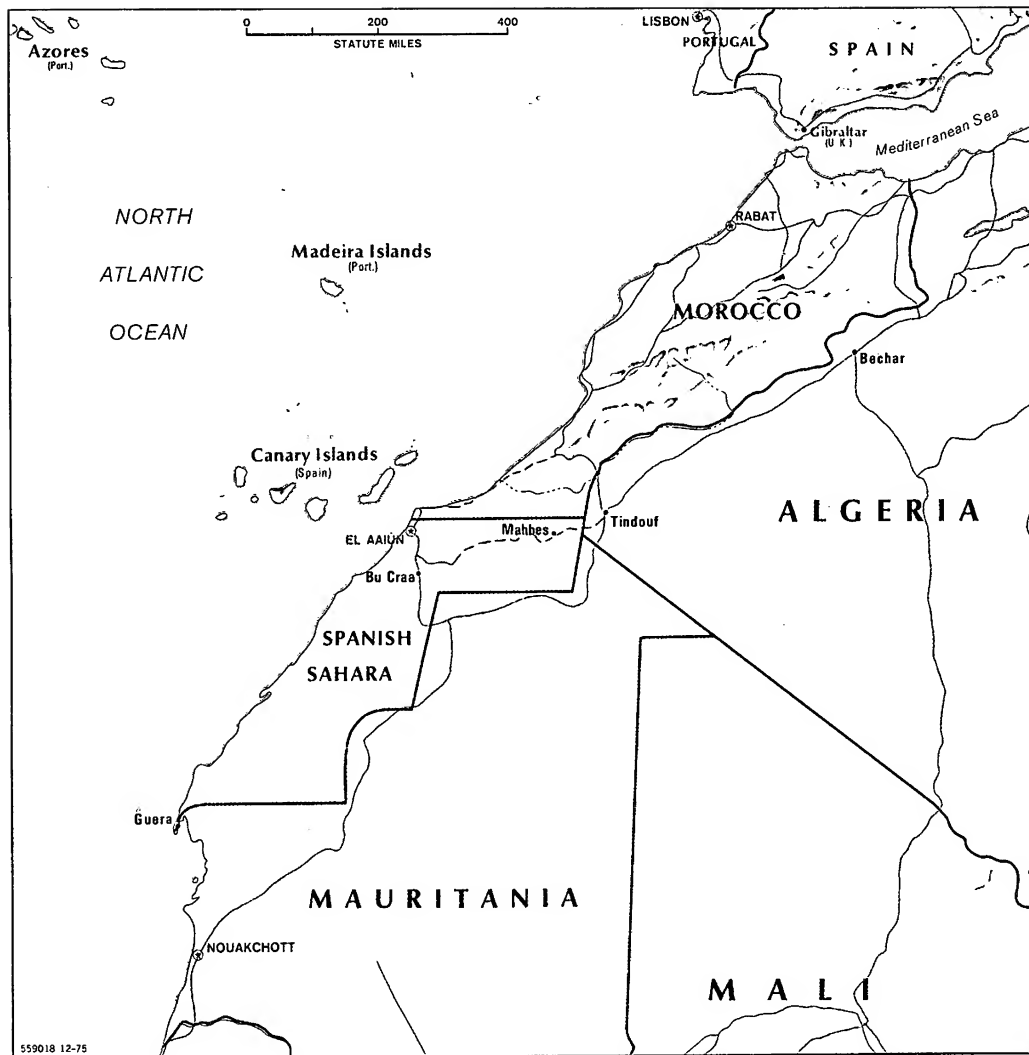
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SPANISH SAHARA

Morocco is continuing to extend and consolidate its control of northern Spanish Sahara.

On December 28, a radio broadcast from Rabat announced that Spain has transferred the military air base and civilian airport at El Aaiun, the territorial capital, to the Moroccan armed forces. Madrid has virtually completed its withdrawal of military and civilian personnel. The few remaining troops will depart by mid-January, leaving behind a diplomatic mission in El Aaiun and a small number of "private policemen" to protect the mission.

Moroccan troops also control most of the towns in the northern part of the disputed territory. Last week the Moroccans took a group of journalists and embassy press attachés on a tour of El Aaiun and two northern towns to demonstrate their control and to deflate the claims made by the Polisario Front, the Saharan independence movement backed by Algeria.

So far the Moroccans have avoided contesting the Front's control of Mahbes, a town in the sensitive northeastern tri-border area. Rabat probably wants to consolidate its grip elsewhere before risking Algerian military intervention by conducting operations so close to the border.

In the southern border area of the disputed territory, Mauritanian troops, aided by a Moroccan unit, have made some headway against Polisario guerrillas. After a week of fighting, the Front was finally dislodged on December 19 from the Saharan border town of Guera. The Mauritians are concerned about protecting a vital railroad that runs parallel to the southern Saharan border.

Although unsuccessful in conventional fighting with Moroccan and Mauritanian forces, the Polisario guerrillas are capable of carrying out various harassing operations. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Front guerrillas recently conducted mine-laying operations in southern Morocco in an attempt to disrupt Moroccan supply lines.

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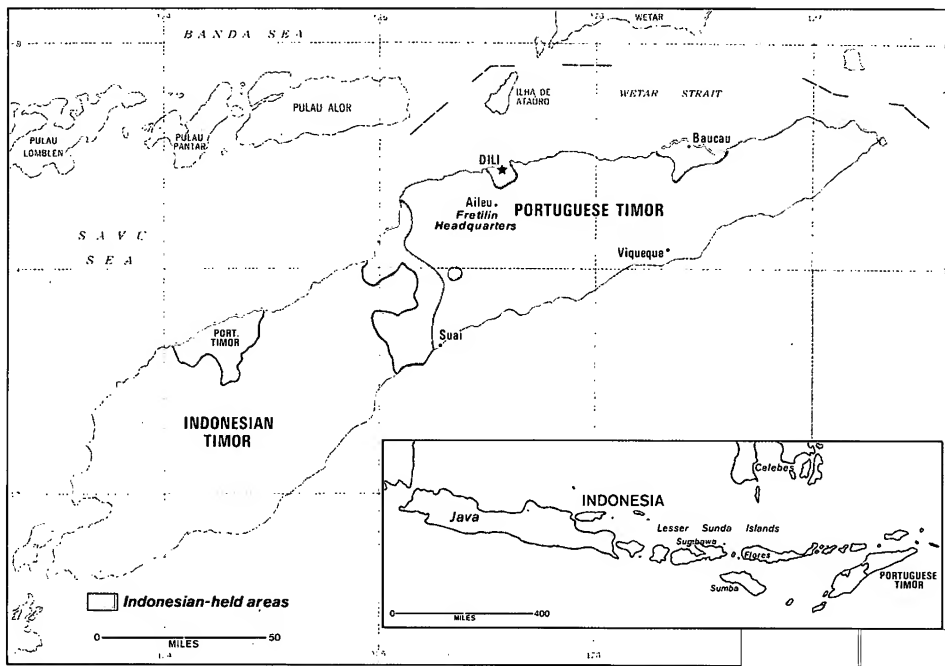
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Morocco apparently is trying to prevent a further deterioration of relations with Algeria over Spanish Sahara. A senior Moroccan Foreign Ministry official arrived in Algiers yesterday for talks with Algerian President Boumediene. He is the second Moroccan emissary in as many weeks to travel there. Rabat's conciliatory efforts are unlikely to make any headway, however, given Algeria's continuing opposition to a Moroccan takeover in the Sahara and its strong support of the Polisario Front.

The Algerians reportedly are reinforcing Tindouf, their major military base in the tri-border area with Morocco and Sahara. Air travel into southern Algeria has been restricted, especially for foreigners. Despite this activity and the acquisition of arms abroad, we doubt that Algeria is preparing for a direct assault on Morocco or an incursion into Spanish Sahara. Algiers' efforts probably are intended, for now at least, to exert psychological pressure on Rabat and to give a lift to the Polisario Front.



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NOTES

Indonesian troops began moving into the interior of Portuguese Timor last week.

Air and ground attacks have been launched against Fretilin positions south of Dili and Baucau. Rainy weather and stiff Fretilin resistance are slowing the advance. The Indonesians have not been able to take the Fretilin headquarters at Aileu, Viqueque, or the coastal city of Suai. Meanwhile, Jakarta is continuing to pour in large quantities of supplies and reinforcements. Troop strength has swelled to well over 25,000

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The USSR thus far has reacted cautiously to China's decision to release the three helicopter crewmen.

Soviet media have carried only brief reports on Peking's move and the arrival of the crew in Moscow. Soviet embassy officials in Peking, however, are obviously pleased about the release, professing to see in China's behavior a major conciliatory gesture. They told US officials that they were surprised by the Chinese action and were particularly struck by what they saw as an apologetic tone in the announcement.

* * *

Soviet Premier Kosygin's good-will visit to Turkey was short on substance, but it did improve the atmosphere between Moscow and Ankara.

In the communiqué issued at the end of the visit, the USSR and Turkey said they intend to prepare a "political document" on friendly relations and cooperation. This appears to be an attempt by the Turks to sidestep Moscow's oft-made proposal for a treaty of friendship and cooperation. It may involve no more than a reiteration of the declaration of principles the two sides signed during Soviet President Podgorny's visit in 1972.

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Indian Prime Minister Gandhi's Congress Party has unanimously approved a resolution she endorsed calling for an indefinite extension of the six-month-old state of emergency and a one-year postponement of parliamentary elections that were due next March.

The party's two-thirds majority in parliament ensures quick extension of the state of emergency shortly after the next legislative session begins on January 5. As long as the emergency remains in effect, the present parliament can extend its own life for successive one-year periods by a majority vote.

The party also has called for a "thorough re-examination" of the constitution to determine whether it is responsive to "the needs of the people." This proposal suggests that Gandhi next may push for constitutional revisions aimed at permanently strengthening the powers of the executive branch at the expense of the courts.

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